

B R O B D I N G N A G

 Brobdingnag #81

1966AQ

23 February 1968

Player Replacement.

The problem of what to do when players resign, or drop out, from games has been with us almost from the beginning of postal play. 1963B, the second game formed, had several resignations, although they occurred comparatively late in the game; long prior to that, in real time, the case had arisen of Paul Harley's entering games and then ceasing play after making only 3 or 4 moves.

Attempts at solution of the problem have been numerous, and none of them has been particularly successful. The first attempted solution was to declare a player out of the game after a specified number of missed moves, usually 2, or 3, consecutive misses; the gamesmaster would then call for volunteers to fill the vacancy. The difficulty, of course, was that, after three missed moves and a further wait to get a volunteer, the position would normally be in such a deplorable state as not to be worth re-assigning anyhow.

The next development was the stand-by player and automatic replacement system, sometimes called, by those who dislike it, the "musical chairs" system. Originated in Graustark, it has been widely copied in other 'zines. In it one or more stand-by players are designated for each game. If a player misses a single move the stand-by is directed to send in the following move. If on the following move the original player sends in a set of orders, he retains control of his country; if not, the stand-by's move is accepted and, from that time forward, he becomes the player for that country. This means that, if a player misses two consecutive moves, he is automatically replaced, and that the replacement player has a set of moves in for those second missed moves, thus preventing, in large measure, the deterioration of the position that was almost inevitable with the earlier system of asking for volunteers after the missed moves had occurred.

This system also has a very grave fault, which an example will demonstrate. In game, which I have not been able to locate, two countries, which we will call A and B, missed moves. The stand-by was directed to send in moves for both of them. Consider now a continuing player who wishes to open negotiations with B. He writes to both the original player for that country and to the stand-by explaining his proposal. Suddenly he realizes that he cannot send this letter to the stand-by, because the plans he is advocating include an attack on A, and the stand-by may turn out to be A, on this very move. So that the automatic replacement system, in this form, effectively prevents any negotiation on the part of continuing players. This makes it, in my opinion, the worst of all possible systems. Other players have other candidates for that honour, as we shall see.

(To be fair, it should be mentioned that this calling on one man to submit moves for two countries, no one knowing which,

if either, he will eventually play, is unusual. As usually played there are several stand-by players, and, in the case of two or more moves missed on the same season of play, different players are assigned to the countries missing.)

The automatic replacement system seems to appeal most strongly to those who hold what might be called the Press Release philosophy of the game. For them the important thing is the continuing development of the Memoirs of Captain Schnabelwopski, Graf von-und-zu Schnabelwops: a set of moves from every country is required as a suitable backdrop, but whether these moves have any relevance to the strategic situation on the board is a minor matter.

At about the same time as the automatic replacement system appeared, Wild 'n Woolly introduced its system. In Wild 'n Woolly there are two announcements of the list of players and their countries before beginning of play. The first one is purely tentative to see if the players like the company they find themselves in; A player who doesn't may drop out at this stage without penalty. Publication of the second, or final, players list is then, among other things, a statement that each player has agreed to play with the particular players who have been assigned to the other six countries. Logically, the continuing players have to be given the same opportunity to approve, or not, any replacement player. So it is the practice, when a player resigns or quits, to announce the name of the replacement, and to ask the continuing players if they approve of him or not. Only when such approval has been obtained from all surviving players can the replacement submit moves.

Strange cases have arisen. In one game a player was pressed for time and a temporary replacement was found. For some reason temporary replacements do not have to be approved. After playing for some 4 or 5 moves, and thinking that the original player was not returning to the game, the replacement player asked to have his position regularized and to be declared the official player for the country concerned. Although by this time all the others had come to regard the replacement as the actual player, the approval machinery promptly went into action. All players were asked to approve of this man who had, in fact, been playing the position for the previous two or three "years". One player neglected to send in his approval, with his moves, and the next move of the replacement was, accordingly, not accepted.

Whatever the merits of allowing players to decide on whether they find the other players in a game congenial, the system is plainly unworkable in the case of replacement. There will always be some player to whom it will be an advantage to prevent or delay the assignment of a replacement to the leaderless country. To require explicit statement of approval of the surviving players is, therefore, to put very heavy demands on their good sportsmanship, as well as on their attention to the game.

It is not clear whether the other players are actually asked to approve the replacement.

The next system to appear on the Diplomacy scene was the Big Brother, or "three misses and you're out" system. It goes back to the rulebook statement, "If a player leaves during the game, it is assumed that civil government in his country has collapsed." And so on, as given in the final paragraph of the rules. In a postal game, of course, it is impossible to tell if a player has intentionally and permanently left a game or not. A missed move may mean momentary forgetfulness, inefficiency on the part of the post office, or almost anything else. So Charles Weinsel, in basing his system on the rulebook statement, had to adopt some arbitrary rule to decide when a player should be regarded as having left. His rule is that to miss three moves, not necessarily consecutively, would constitute departure from the game. From that point on the player's remaining forces would stand where they were, without supporting one another, until annihilated by the other powers.

In practice, in most instances, this gives a reasonably workable rule. A disinterested player leaves the game. The fact that he is no longer there is known to all other players and they can make their plans accordingly. However, in at least one instance, the application of the rule badly disrupted a game. In game 1966L, Big Brother game #1, two players gave up early. In their case the application of the BB rule had little effect on the game. However, in the year and a half between February 1966, when the game began, and August 1967, Charles Wells, playing Turkey, had missed moves on two occasions; then, in the latter month, while on vacation in Norway, a move of his was late in arriving. This being the third miss he was removed from the game. Charles had a relatively good position, which he was obviously playing, the missed move being accidental. His removal so annoyed Dan Brannan, playing France, the strongest survivor, that the latter also ceased play, resulting in the game degenerating into a mere race between the two remaining survivors, to see who could mop up territory the fastest. In year 1915, Loning, playing Germany, had 8 forces in action; I, playing Italy, had 5. The other 21 forces on the board were dead, having no commanders. It is perhaps not surprising that Charles Wells stated in a letter that he regards the BB system as the worst possible, as it guarantees that moves will be missed.

The BROB system, also used by slab and some others, is that a player remains in control of his country until he resigns. If he resigns formally he is asked to find his own replacement, although if this is not possible, the gamesmaster will do it for him. Again, in normal cases, when deserters are down to a few forces, I think it is a workable system and has the advantage of not disrupting a game by bringing in new players in mid-game. However, as 1966IV in this magazine shows, it can be very bad. In that game a player with nearly a third of the force on the board quit without resigning, and in accordance with the rule the gamesmaster was unable to appoint a replacement. When Monte Zelazny was planning his journal, Aeolus, he originally planned a rule like the BROB one. The one that he finally adopted reads, "In most cases the Gamesmaster will not assign a replacement player after Spring 1901". I think that the change shown by the underlined words was due to what happened in

1966AV, a game in which Monte was playing.

Clif Ollila in International Enquirer introduced the sealed order system, which has also been adopted by Erehwon. In it a player sends in sealed general instructions as to his ideas of lines of play, future development, whom to attack, and so on. If moves for the player are not received, this set of instructions is handed to some bystander who, on the basis of them, prepares a set of moves. In the case of a move missed due to a letter lost in the mail, or sent late, this may serve some purpose; but for the far more usual case of a player losing interest and dropping out, I fail to see what it will accomplish - if a player is too disinterested to send in ordinary moves, will he summon up the energy to write a brief describing his plans, and keep the thing updated as the play of the game progresses?

Something which I think needs stressing is that what we should try to avoid is disruption of games. A missed move is, to some extent, such a disruption, but it is far from being the most serious one which can occur. The appearance of a new player in mid-game is often a much greater disruption than a few missed moves would be. For confirmation of this see John Koning's analysis of Game 1965U, given in stab #43.

As we have seen, all schemes so far devised have proved to be imperfect. The genius who has a real solution to the problem of players dropping out in mid-game has not yet published that solution. If he has no other convenient rostrum, the pages of Brobdingnag are open to him.

- - - - -

Errors

In addition to the typos with which it normally abounds, there have been a number of more serious errors in recent issues of BROB.

1. In #80, in the list of supply centres held by the various powers given for Game 1966AV, Bulgaria is credited to both England and Russia. It is in Russian possession; England should be shown as owning Belgium. The count is correct.
2. On page 11 of the same issue comment is made on the time mail takes between Ralston and Spokane. That should read between Ralston and Seattle.
3. In the rating list given on page 4 of BROB #78 the scores of Earl Thompson and Jack Greene are reversed. Jack should have +4 and Earl +3.
4. In the same rating list the score indicated for Conrad von Metzke should read -3 instead of -1. Von Metzke is the only player in so many games that I have had to use two sides of an file index card to keep track of his Diplomacy history and, in making up the list, I neglected to look at the flip side.

5. The Rating List errors mentioned are reflected also in the Current Game Rating list. The same amounts should be added to or subtracted from the scores of the three named individuals.

Completed Games.

In the past few weeks a large number of games have ended. Notes on them are given below:

1965Q

This game, recently completed in Graustark is the longest Postal game ever played, running to the end of 1922. The previous record holder was 1963B which went to 1918. This game was a two way tie between John Koning, playing England, and Terry Kuch, playing Turkey. It is expected that there will be a full summary in a forthcoming Graustark.

1965R

Congratulations are in order for Don Miller, the winner of 1965R playing Russia. The game, also known as Orthanc-A, began in Barad-Dur, was continued in Orthanc when the former journal split, and was finally taken over by sTab. A full summary appears in sTab #42.

1965U

1965U was also played in sTab and a summary of it appears in #43 of that journal. The game ended in a three-way draw. John Smythe's Turkey holding half the forces on the board at the end of play, the remainder being held by Charles Weinsel's France and my own England. Smythe's cover for the issue shows the board being broken into one half and two quarter bits.

1966L

And very hearty congratulations to John Koning on his win, as Germany in this one. This is the first win that Germany has had. This game was originally billed as "The Gamesmaster's Game of Experts"; the players were all gamesmasters but I am not so sure of the "experts" part of this as there can be few games with so many fouled up orders, missed moves, odd-ball strategy, and so on as this one had. Some comment on one feature of it is given in the main article a few pages back. As Big Brother does not normally publish a supply centre chart for its games, one is given below:

	<u>1901</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>09</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
Eng	4	5	6	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fra	4	5	6	7	9	9	10	10	10	11/10	12/11	13/12
Ger	5	6	7	8	8	9	8	8	9	8	9/8	11/8
Ita	4	4	5	7	7	9	9	9	9	9	6	4
A-h	4	5	3	1	1	OUT						
Rus	5	4	1	OUT								
Tur	4	4	6	7	7	6	6	6	5	5	6	5

	<u>1913</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>
Eng	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fre	16/13	12	15	13	9	6	3
Ger	8	12/8	8	10/8	13/9	14/12	19/15 and wins!
Ita	4	4	5	5	7/6	9/8	8
Tur	5	5	5	5	4	4	3

And the observant will have noticed that my remark above, that 1963D held the record for the longest game until 1965Q, took it is doubtfully correct as 1966L ended shortly before 1965Q.

Journal: Big Brother #'s 1-52. Gamesmaster: Charles Weinsel. Players: England, Ron Bounds, declared in civil disorder in Fall 1905. France, Dan Brennan, declared in civil disorder in Fall 1916, Germany, John Honing, Italy, John McCallum. Austria-Ungary, Jack Chalker, declared in civil disorder in Fall 1905. Conrad von Metze, resigned and declared out of game Spring 1902. Turkey Charles Wells, declared in civil disorder in Fall 1914.

1966AA

This game has just ended in Graustark. The outcome was a two way tie between Jim Latimer's Germany and Rod Walker's Austria-Ungary. Latimer actually had 18 supply centres three years before the end of the game but was unable to build for them due to occupied home centres, a fate to which Germany is particularly prone. A supply centre chart and summary will undoubtedly be given in a forthcoming Graustark.

1966AM

Recently ended in ADAG this game gave Monte Zelazny his second win, and was also the second win ever for Germany. A supply centre chart will be found in ADAG #25.

1966AU

Another win for Germany! And in the same issue of ADAG as the game above. Congratulations to Bud Pendergrass!

1966AV

This EMOB game was reported here in full last issue. It is mentioned again here as it has not previously appeared in the Rating List.

1966AX

This game has been cancelled after many vicissitudes. Begun in Barad-Dur it had reached 1903 when the editor, Jack Chalker, had to leave for military training. The replacement gamesmaster published only one issue. On Chalker's return last summer, after the game had been in abeyance for 6 months, he asked the players whether the game should be continued from the point previously arrived at, or if it should be re-started. Apparently the vote was for re-starting, as the players

were assigned new countries. Then there was a further half year gap with no moves published. The game was then handed over to Don Miller, who again polled the players to see if the game should continue. Most had had enough; the few that wanted to go on were assigned to a new game in Diplophobia.

1966JEF

Identical history to 1966AX, above, except that it had only gone as far as 1901 when first suspended.

1966BJ

Congratulations to James Dygert on his win in this game, playing France. This is Big Brother's game 3 and a supply centre chart is given below as BB does not supply this feature.

	<u>1901</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>09</u>	<u>10</u>
Eng	4	3	1	OUT						
Fra	5	6	7	9	10	11	15/14	15	16	15 and Wins!
Ger	5	6	5	6	7	9	10	11	14/11	11
Ita	5	6	7	9	7	4	OUT			
A-H	2	1	OUT							
Rus	5	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	1	1
Tur	4	6	8	5	7	8	8	7/6	3	2

The game ended in Spring 1910 and the figures given for that year are the number of forces on the board at that time.

Journal: Big Brother, #3s 22-52. Gamesmaster, Charles Reinsel. Players. England: Charles Alexander, declared in civil disorder Spring 1903. France, James Dygert. Germany, Charles Turner. Italy, Edi Birsan. Austria-Hungary, Margaret Camignani. Russia, John Honing. Turkey, Roland Tzudiker, declared in civil disorder in Winter 1908.

1967AJF

The remaining Barad-Dur game now cancelled. Unlike the others this one had not begun play. From the three cancelled games enough players were salvaged to make up one game which has now been announced in Diplophobia. Whether that game will now be assigned one of the numbers of one of the cancelled games, or a new one of its own, I do not know.

BAOB Combined Rating List.

These newly completed games, in addition to the corrections listed on a previous page give rise to a new Rating List. It will be noticed that this batch of games give Germany 3 wins (the first it has ever had), one tie, and 1 second place. This has made a tremendous difference in the country listing where Germany has been, for so long, in the cellar position. It is now marginally above Austria. Perhaps Calhauer is right. When country listing were first given he said that he thought

that among skilled players all 7 countries were closely equal. The tendency has been for both the leading countries, Turkey and England, and the trailing ones, Germany, Austria, and Italy to edge closer to the centre. Perhaps with greater experience all players are now assessing more accurately the intrinsic strengths of the various countries and are now using that knowledge in the alliances which they seek. The new country listing,

Turkey	+39	59.9
England	+28	57.1
France	+9	52.3
Russia	-5	48.7
Italy	-15	46.2
Germany	-27	43.1
Austria	-29	42.6.

Games now listed are the following: 1963A, B, 1964, A, B, D, 1965A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, L, K, O, Q, R, S, T, U, 1966B, D, E, L, K, O, M, AK, AM, AP, AQ, AV, BJ. The three underlined are 5-man games and are not counted in the country listing.

Personal Listing

Bob Adams	-2; 38	(-2)
Michael Aita	-4; 33	(-4)
John Alden		(+1)
Charles Alexander	-12; 19	(-30)
Carl Anderson		(-6)
Hugh Anderson		(+1)
Len Atkins	+2; 56	(+2)
John Austin	+2; 56	(+2)
Len Bailes		(-4)
Brian Bailey	-2; 42	(-3)
Douglas Baker		(+2)
Edwin Baker	0; 50	(0)
Brenda Banks	-2; 42	(-2)
Stephen Barr	-6; 31	(-12)
Don Barrows		(+5)
Don Berman	0; 50	(0)
John Beshara		(0)
Douglas Beyerlein	+2; 58	(-2)
Clint Bigglostone	-4; 25	(-4)
Edd Birsen	-11; 32	(-1)
John Boardman	-4; 40	(-4)
Ron Bounds	-5; 38	(-11)
Don Brennan	-7; 43	(+1)
Christina Brennan	0; 50	(+1)
Richard Bryant	+4; 67	(+4)
Pick Brooks	+5; 71	(+5)
Tom Bulmer	-5; 29	(-5)

Art Canfil	-4; 33	(-4)
Chuck Carey		(+1)
Phil Castora	-14; 14	(-20)
William Celstre		(-6)
Jack Chalker	-6; 38	(-6)
Bill Christian	+1; 54	(+1)
Frank Clark	+2; 55	(+8)
Robert Cline	-4; 33	(-9)
Sid Cochran		(+1)
Lou Curtis		(-3)

John Davey	0; 50	(0)
Ken Davidson	+5; 66	(+6)
Michael Dobson		(+4)
Scott Duncan	-6; 31	(-6)
James Dygert	+12; 69	(+19)

Thomas Eller		(+1)
Dan Evans		(+1)

Alan Fisher		(-4)
Ken Fletcher		(-1)
Dave Francis	+2; 58	(0)
Dennis Frisch	-4; 33	(-9)

Leonard Garland	-4; 33	(-7)
Margaret Gernignani	-12; 19	(-52)
Sidney Get	-6; 25	(-6)
Wayne Gibbs		(+1)
Alexis Gilliland		(-4)
Al Goggins	-2; 42	(-2)
Barry Gold	-9; 22	(-9)
James Goldman	-6; 38	(-14)
Thomas Gorman	-6; 25	(-6)
Stephen Gordon		(-4)
Jack Greene	+4; 67	(+8)
Thomas Griffin		(+11)

Bill Haggart		(+2)
Michael Makulin		(+1)
Jay Maldeman		(-1)
Jack Marless	-4; 38	(-4)
Paul Marley	-10; 19	(-10)
George May		(+2)
Sherry May		(+1)
Ben Mendin	0; 50	(0)
Wayne Moheisel		(1)
Stephen Mueston		(+1)
Allan Ruff (W)	-6; 38	(+9)
Perry Ruston	-1; 46	(-1)

Jerald Jacks	-7; 33	(-13)
Clyde Johnson		(-9)
Mark Johnson		(-4)

Stuart Heshner	-5; 33%	(-5)
Bernie Kling	-10; 19%	(-10)
John Moning (W)	+25; 73%	(+28)
Terry Kuch	+5; 36%	(+13)

Bob Lake	+4; 37%	(+4)
James Latimer (W)	+3; 35%	(+15)
David Lebling	-5; 33%	(+6)
Paul Leitch		(+1)
Fred Lerner	-12; 19%	(-12)
Kenneth Levinson	+4; 37%	(+4)
W Lee Linden	+2; 58%	(+4)
Greg Long	-4; 33%	(-1)
Jack Longbine		(-6)

John McCollum (W)	+15; 36%	(+23)
Dave McDaniel	-4; 25%	(-4)
Peter McDonald		(+4)
Mike McIntyre		(-3)
James MacKenzie (W)	+6; 60%	(+10)

John Mazor	-4; 33%	(+1)
Banks Mebane	+9; 78%	(+7)
Mike Melby		(+1)
Richard Metzger		(+1)
Donald Miller (W)	+14; 86%	(+18)
Mike Miller		(+2)
Gregory Molenaar	-2; 42%	(-2)
Fritz Mulhauser		(-3)
James Munroe	-2; 42%	(-2)
Frank Musbach		(-2)

Hal Mus	+2; 58%	(+9)
Derek Nelson (W)	+15; 66%	(+19)

Tommy Ogle		(-6)
Clif Ollila		(+3)
Mark Orings	+2; 56%	(+3)

Jerry Page	-6; 25%	(-6)
Geo. Parks	0; 50%	(-7)
Ron Parks	-3; 38%	(-9)
Steven Patt	-5; 29%	(-5)
Nick Payment		(-6)
Harold Peck	+4; 37%	(+9)
Larry Peery	+4; 37%	(+12)
Bruce Pelz (W)	+6; 75%	(+6)
Dian Pelz	+4; 37%	(+4)
Fud Pendergrass (W)	+6; 75%	(+6)
Jerry Pournelle (W)	+12; 88%	(+16)
Steve Powleland		(-2)
Eugene Prosnitz		(+8)

Don Necklies	-6; 25%	(-6)
Frank Reinhardt		(+2)
Charles Reinsel (W)	+8; 61%	(+15)
Jose Revillagigedo		(+2)
Tom Rosenbaum		(+1)
Jock Root	+6; 62%	(+2)

James Sanders	+2; 56%	(-2)
San Diego DC+CDW		(+1)
John Sandoval	-6; 25%	(-6)
Mike Santos		(+1)
Joel Sattel	-6; 25%	(-6)
Gail Schov	+2; 62%	(0)
Bill Schreffler	-6; 31%	(-6)
Dick Schultz	-10; 24%	(-14)
Al Scott		(-2)
Richard Shagrin	0; 50%	(+4)
John Smythe (W)	+20; 57%	(+19)
Bob Speed		(+1)
Bill Stewart	-6; 25%	(-6)
Anders Swenson	-1; 47%	(-1)

Jerry Tenney		(-5)
Earl Thompson	+4; 55%	(0)
Mehran Thomson		(+2)
Puddy Tretick		(+1)
Ben Turk		(+2)
Charles Turner (W)	+13; 75%	(+26)
Roland Zudiker	-12; 31%	(-20)
Richard Uhr	-5; 29%	(-9)

Michael Vaughan		(0)
John Videtto		(+1)
Conrad von Lotzke (W)		
	-5; 46%	(-5)

Chris Wagner	+4; 37%	(+6)
Mod Walker	+9; 78%	(+16)
Robert Ward	-1; 52%	(-10)
Charles Wells (W)	+25; 90%	(+31)
Bob Weston		(+2)
Gerald White		(+1)
Stephen Willard		(-6)
Karl Wittmann		(+2)

Monte Zelazny (W) +14; 86% (+21)

Inadvertently omitted:

Bob Komada		(+2)
------------	--	------

Readers will have noticed that the form of the Rating List differs considerably from previous versions of it. Reasons for the change are two in number:

1. Up to now EROB has published a new edition of its Rating List every other issue or so, as results of completed games came in. This meant publishing over and over again the names of many players no longer active. It is my present intention to publish the full Rating List only about every six months or so and just to publish amendments as games are completed. As it would be difficult, under such a system, to find the name of a given player in a list arranged in ranking order, an alphabetic order has been used for the above listing. The white space on the right hand side of the page should allow those interested to write in amendments as they appear.

2. With three Rating Lists it would be necessary, using ranking order, to publish each name three times. By using an alphabetical order each name need only be given once.

What are the three figures given after each name? The first one is the EROB Completed Game rating. The second figure is the same thing averaged over the games the player has completed and then reduced to a percentage scale, as has been done for a long time with the country listing. If we like to look at it that way, it shows how well a given player stacks up against a hypothetical perfect player who wins all his games, such a player getting, by definition, 100%. For reasons briefly indicated in an earlier issue a raw average should not be used but a somewhat modified one to allow for the fact that we do not have sufficient information to adequately score a player who has been in only a few games. This will probably be discussed in greater detail at a later date.

The third figure, given in brackets, is the score of the player in the EROB Current Game Rating List. Many players, none of whose games has yet been completed, have only this figure shown.

Unfortunately it is not easy to devise a percentage, or averaging scheme for games in progress. n , the number of games played, appears not only as a divisor to obtain the average, but also as an exponent in the asymptotic shaping factor. To introduce fractional games, as we would have to do for games in progress, would, therefore, necessitate the use of a log-log slide rule to compute the percentages; and I can make enough mistakes now, without that. However, the reader can make a rough estimate of the current percentage for himself. If the Current Game score, in brackets, is considerably above the completed game score, it means that the player concerned is doing all right in his games in progress. Probably, in 3 months or a year from now, when this average includes the games he is now playing, his percentage score will advance. Charles Turner is a case in point. In all probability a percentage listing published next Thanksgiving will show an advance of about 10% in his Average Rating.

If the Current Game score is about the same as the Completed Game score, it is unlikely that the percentage score will show any marked change in the next six months or so. Incidentally, if the

two scores are not merely close but are identical, it is often an indication that the player is now inactive and is enrolled in no games now in progress; there are exceptions, of course.

Finally if the Current Game score is markedly lower than the Completed Game score, the percentage rating will likely drop. In fact, there is much more certainty in this case. To have a Current Score lower than the Completed score, implies that the player has already been eliminated in one or more games in progress. The damage has already been done and can not now be avoided, the best that the player can do is to attempt to secure compensating gains elsewhere.

The alphabetical listing has its advantages but, when all is said and done, a horse race is a more exciting event than to see a dozen horses run separately around the track, being clocked, and to see the times chalked on a notice board. So for each of the three Rating Lists, the top ten names are listed below in ranking order, so that we can see at a glance who is now leading the field:

Completed Game Rating List

+25 John Moning
Charles Wells

+20 John Smythe

+15 John McCallum
Derek Nelson

+14 Donald Miller
Monte Zelazny

+13 Charles Turner

+12 James Dygert
Jerry Fournelle
...

Average Rating List

90% Charles Wells

88% Jerry Fournelle

86% Donald Miller
Monte Zelazny

78% Frank Lebane

75% Bruce Pelz
Bob Pondergrass
Charles Turner

73% John Moning

71% Dick Brooks
...

Current Game Rating List

+31 Charles Wells

+28 John Moning

+26 Charles Turner

+25 John McCallum

+21 Monte Zelazny

+19 James Dygert
Derek Nelson
John Smythe

+18 Donald Miller

+16 Jerry Fournelle
Red Walker

+15 Charles Leinsel

+14 James Latimer

+13 Terry Much

+12 Jerry Feery

A comparison of these listing immediately brings out some of the advantages of an averaged list for rating purposes. Monte Zelazny has been in Postal Diplomacy for about a year and a half. In that period he has completed three games. He won two of them and came in second in the other, an excellent record, scarcely ever equalled. However, in the standard Completed Game listing he cannot possibly compete with Smythe, Loning, and Wells, all of whom have played the game much longer and are rated on many more games. In the average listing, however, he comes into his own and is among the top four. The situation is similar with Donald Miller and Jerry Pournelle: they have played the game longer than Monte but both prefer to play only two or three games at a time and so, also, do not have many completed games to their credit. Charles Wells, of course, has been in Diplomacy for just over three years, has played a fair number of games, and has done well in them, and so leads all the lists.

It will be noticed that, in the average listing, there is only 4 points between the top four players, and that there is then a gap of 8 points before the next player is reached. I think that there can be little doubt that it is these four, Miller, Pournelle, Wells, and Zelazny, who are the real front runners today.

One name is quite conspicuous by its absence from the average listing - John Smythe's. Two games have recently been completed in which he was originally enrolled but in which he later abandoned play. This sort of thing can be disastrous to an average score. The thing measures performance, not potential.

- - - - -

In EXOB #79 I stated that I didn't understand why the Glock Listing List corresponded more closely with Current Listing Lists than with completed game ones. The reason is quite plain. In the latest edition of that listing, though not in earlier ones, Dave Lebling did take into account current games, as far as eliminated players were concerned. That is, it is to some extent a Completed Game listing.

- - - - -

Famous Last Words.

"As for rating systems, I think they are all nonsense."

- John McC luum, in a letter published in Graustark #91, back in the days when I didn't have a rating system of my own, and consequently had enough time to be able to write letters to Graustark.

Game 1966Aq

Game 1966Aq ended in MOD #78 with the Fall 1911 moves. Several Press Releases, from various sources, came in intended for that season of play but arriving too late for publication at that time. They are given below,

Press Releases, Late Press, Fall 1911.

Paris. The southern front was re-inforced by another fleet in the south of Spain. Now five French fleets are available to blockade the Turkish forces. In addition another army will be moved to Marseilles to bolster the French troops lost in the Piedmont and Tuscany battles.

Again France vows to hold the Turks back. "They will not profit from their treachery because good is better than evil, because the right are blessed and the wrong are damned, but mainly because they have low military leaders."

Ferrikibitz. Yeah, we all had a great Chanukah. It was just joyful and wonderful and that Manachevets was just super.... even the greenbeans were particularly fresh and tasty....

St. Peerigrad. Prime Minister Ben Peeri today addressed his first speech to the Palestinian Parliament and through it to the world, particularly the perfidious Russian bears. said the Prime Minister, "Yea, verily, they are such uncouth bums. Only the Russians would join with that bum Abdul Green.

St. Peerigrad. You know, just thinking about it, it suddenly dawned on me that I am the only person to have met all three of these horrible players: Reinsel, Thompson, and Greene. I think that Gail, Earl Thompson's wife, could probably beat the pack of them while answering the phone.

In addition to the late Press Releases, given above, there was a late set of moves, from France, which arrived two days after the deadline and after the moves and the greater part of the rest of #78 was on stencil. Had they arrived on time there would have been no annihilations of French units, and France would also have acquired Norway. London would also have been retained by France. Supply centre count would then have been

Russia 17
France 9
Turkey 8

France would have had to destroy two forces, and Russia would have been able to build 3. The gamesmaster's feeling is that the game would then have ended in one more year of play, in any event, barring a major change of alliance pattern, which seems unlikely in view of the players' comments.

Although the game ended in issue #78, both moves and Press Releases came in intended for the Winter of 1911. They are given overleaf.

Game 1968A3

Winter 1911

Abbas (Meinsel): Build army St. Petersburg. Build army Moscow. Build army Warsaw. Build army Sevastopol.

Press Releases.

St. Petersburg. Victory is sweet!

Constantinople. You could not guess how totally satisfied and excited over the ending of the present war in Europe the people of this city and land felt. All armies were immediately demobilized, as well as the fleets, and sent home to their families.

Sinope. Sultan Abdul Osman III left this city by sea, to journey to Russia to see the Tsar. He was quoted as saying, "I come first to congratulate the Tsar, and then to arrange the plans for a reuniting of all Moslem peoples under the Ottoman Empire. We must also work out an economic recovery program for central Europe." When asked if Generals Dis-maye or Collapse would be decorated, the sultan answered with a curt, "No."

Palma, Malcoric Islands. The Spanish Liberation Army is daily expected to enter Madrid.

St. Peerigrad. The Great Perfidious Perfection Personified Peery sends his benovolent greeting to Abdul Greene. Things are so nice on the leery strip right now. Congratulations on your fine showing. You have studied your Peerist tactics well.

Comments of Game 1968A3.

A number of players, and others, sent in commentary on this game. First we hear from Charles Meinzel, who played Russia, and who was the game winner.

Charles Meinzel, Russia: "How I Won the War!"

To begin with I have never met Scott Duncan ((the player for Austria)). Delaware county is 300 miles away from Clarion county. I have no record of any letters in my files from him. However, I did read a few of his comments in an eastern Diplomacy line. So I decided that since I had to attack some one, that Austria would be it!

Germany and Russia had an understanding and mostly unwritten at that. I knew that Derek ((Nelson, playing Germany)) was a good player as I've played it Youngstown with him. I knew he would not attack Russia. I assume he knew that I would not attack him.

France and Russia had a non-aggression pact. France to get England and Russia to get Scandinavia.

Italy wanted to join Turkey and Russia but, except to encourage Italy to attack Austria, Russia was not interested. After all, all of Italy was promised to Turkey except for Venice. On October 25th, 1936, ((Spring-Will 1902)), Jim Goldman ((Italy)) said that he would never permit Austria to fall without putting his own forces on the line. This made Italy victim number two.

Russia really did not want to fight England but Greg Long

((Playing England)) kept attacking me on the north. Russia decided that England had to fall third. From December 1966 to April 1967 ((1903-05)), France and Russia were fighting England almost like allies. Much mail crossed. Also much mail from Italy to join him to attack Turkey. No mail between Germany and Russia. (It wasn't needed!)

From August 1966 ((beginning of game)), Turkey and Russia were allies. At the beginning Greene ((Turkey)) wanted us to ally with Italy. As early as August and September 1966 ((1901)), Turkey and Russia, on paper, divided up Austria, the Balkans, and Italy. The only difference at the end was the switch of Venice for Serbia after the "Civil War" between Turkey and Russia.

So, I had won the Diplomacy.

On June 27th ((Winter, 1907)), after the "Civil War", Turkey sued for peace and agreed to help Russia against France.

Actually I owe my victory to the following:

1. Italy stabbed Austria in trying to take Trieste.
2. France stabbed Italy by taking Tunis.
3. France helped me to take Munich from Germany.
4. Turkey kept building all those fleets. Thanks, Jack!
5. Early Thompson's anger at Jack Greene. (I wonder if they were allied?)
6. The fact that both Turkey and France waited to see who I would attack first.
7. Posting my two fleets to the North Sea. This was the turning point! ((1910)).
8. My Tactics and Strategy worked well to the end.

I wish to thank all my opponents for the great game they played and for the many hours of pleasure this game has given me over these many months.

Mr. McCollum, your resume was both interesting and quite accurate ((#78)). It was a pleasure to play in the game!

((As will have been noticed all references that Charles makes to timing of events are to real time. I have inserted, in double brackets, the equivalent game season. The next commentary is from Jack Greene, who was the runner up, and who played Turkey. -jamec))

Jack Greene, Turkey: First of all, my congratulations to Charles Meinsel. Although basically ((he played)) a conservative game, from my little knowledge, and not a wild game, Charles deserved the win. Anyway, I couldn't win!

I was really sorry that Mr. Thompson had to be the big loser, but I saw it was either him or Charles. Some people deserve to get a good back-stab, like ((name deleted)), but Earl didn't. Admittedly a little bit of underhandedness is present but then he wasn't too "realistically evil".

This is the only game that I've seen Mr. Nelson in and it still surprises me that not more action was seen from him. I agree that Germany is a tough nation to play and England didn't join Germany (or France), yet I was disappointed.

I had played many across-the-board games before, but this was my first postal, with one minor exception, and I learned quite a lot from it.

((And then we heard from some bystanders who watched the game. First, Ed Miller, -jamcc))

Ed Miller: On 1936AQ. I would say that 1908 was the decisive year in determining Russian victory. Thompson's pre-occupation with the Turkish defection, or redefection, seems to have been pivotal.

Italian continuance of anti-Austrian campaign was imprudent in the face of the Russo-Turkish alliance. The Italian reasoning evades me also. It seems to be a tactical consideration with a lack of strategic planning. In view of Goldman's experience this evaluation may be in error.

((In my view Goldman's action of continuing his attack on Austria not only might be, but definitely was, an error. As to Thompson's failure to switch his major attack to the northern front in 1908 it is harder to say. There might have been a chance for him by so doing, but it was never much more than a chance.

This winds up game 1936AQ, any further commentary will appear in the regular letter column. Players in the game are reminded that their subscriptions are now at an end. If they wish to continue receiving EMOB, they should subscribe. Of course, this does not apply to such former 1936AQ players as publish their own journals, with whom I trade.-jamcc))

Game 1936AV.

Game 1936AV, ended in the last issue of EMOB, lived up to its tradition in bring much less commentary that 1936AQ did. However one player did write in and his comment is given below,

Dave Francis, Italy: At the start of the game I had a non-aggression pact with Austria. I planned to attack France and moved accordingly. France threatened me with an attack by Austria. England (Wells) said that France and Austria were allied. France insisted that she was allied with either England or Germany - I don't know which.

So I decided to attack France before it got too strong and to stab Austria before he hit me. Beautiful strategy - provoke a two front war (ugh!) realizing I had flubbed by attacking Austria and having received a letter offering peace from Austria, I sent everything against France. Unfortunately Lunroe ((Austria)) felt one good double cross deserved another. Later on I tried to ally with both France and Turkey but neither would agree. Turkey declared himself neutral in the Italo-Austrian war and wouldn't depart from this strategy until it was too late. As Italy I didn't think I could get Iberia so I helped Germany only to alleviate one of the pressure on me and because I desperately needed a build to help defend against Austria. About this point Russia and I allied and we kept up a firm alliance (from about Spring 1904) until the end of the game.

Unfortunately for Zelazny I missed two vital sets of moves and Shagrin, as soon as he stopped expanding, quit.

One vital point in the game - and this isn't a complaint - was you ruling in the spring 1903 move. Without that I might have gone on to the offensive against Austria.

((The ruling that Dave refers to, was one in support of the rulebook-Boardman solution to Boardman's dilemma. It should be noted that Boardman, Nelson, Koning, Wells, as well as myself interpret the question the same way. None the less there certainly are counter arguments. I hope to discuss this matter again, at greater length in a forthcoming issue.

Players in game 1966IV should read the final paragraph of the discussion of 1966II, above. The position re renewal of subscription and so on is identical in this game.

There was one more comment on 1966II which I had intended to publish above. (Here it is, misplaced, -jamcc))

Norman Zinkhan: I found the resume of game 1966II highly interesting and enlightening reading. I have been following the game with great interest, and a lot of seeming inconsistencies were cleared up. The game was really quite well played, and the press releases were especially enjoyable.

- - - - -

Brobdignag Suspend Regular Publication.

Many readers, about twenty, have asked that there should be a new game shortly in BROB; many of them have asked to be admitted to it if formed. However, as readers of Craustark #150 will have noticed I am to take over, temporarily, several Erhu games this summer. It is also possible that I will be doing the same for several Erehwon games. See Erehwon #7, Vol. II. These two sets of games will give me all the publishing that I wish to do this summer. Therefore, a new game will not be started here now. Brobdignag suspends regular publication with this issue and expects to resume it in June, or thereabouts.

Cash subscribers who would prefer to have a cash refund for the unexpired balance of their subscriptions, rather than wait a few months, should send a card and let me know. If I do not hear I will assume that all such subscribers are content to wait until publication is resumed.

Similarly with publishers with whom I trade. As I keep a running record of all games I am anxious to continue to receive all other Diplomacy 'zines. Their editors should let me know what amount I should send them to keep their 'zines coming until I again resume publishing and so have something to trade.

This does not necessarily mean that there will be no issues of PROZ before June. In particular, I have a number of letters on hand which should be seen by a wider audience. However, issues between now and June will be both few and erratically published.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Strategy and Tactics."

As most readers will know, Strategy and Tactics is a monthly magazine dealing with all forms of wargaming and related activity. (Address: Box 11-187, Loudonville, New York, 12211). Its editor has just returned from many years' duty in the far east. With more time available to him, and with the whole operation now in one spot, S+T is likely to expand steadily.

Strategy and Tactics already has great drawing power. Since the publication of its Diplomacy Special last September the great majority of the names appearing here in the New Blood column have been attracted to the game by S+T. Of the seven names in New Blood last issue, three were a result of the Diplomacy Special issue of S+T, and so was one of those listed in this issue; all this about 4 months after publication of the Special.

S+T has a Diplomacy column, written by Rod Walker, as a regular feature. It will, very shortly, to sponsor another project which will be of interest to all Diplomacy players, namely, an off-shoot journal, Valhalla, to be edited by John Moning. This is meant to provide all types of services for S+T readers, for instance, ads for opponents. It will, from its first issue, carry a Diplomacy game. This first game is by invitation only. However, John Moning has indicated, in glrb #44, that more games will be opened in Valhalla in a few months' time. The price of a subscription to Valhalla for one year (17 issues) is \$2 which should be sent to Strategy and Tactics. A subscription to both glrb and Valhalla, 17 issues of each, costs \$3, surely the best buy available on the Dippy scene. For this combined subscription write to John Moning, 2008 Sherman, Apt. 1, Evanston, Ill., 60201. I guess you should also write John if you want to reserve a place in a forth coming game.

New Magazines

Xanadu, Norman McLeod, 906 Kimberliche Road, McLean, Va., 22101, is a new postal Diplomacy 'zine. It offers games at \$3, for a first game, with graded reductions for those entering more than one.

Aeolus, Monte Zelazny, P. O. Box 1032, Melbourne, Fla., 32901, has published two issues. Resembling the Club more closely than any other existing 'zine, it has borrowed one feature from Lonely Mountain: the moves are published and sent out to the players on the deadline date, but the magazine itself is published some time later than enough material has accumulated to make up an issue. This allows all games to proceed at a good rate of speed, even if a particular issue has to be delayed on account of some editorial difficulty or other.

The Mercenary, is a new Wargame publication, with a subscription price of \$4.15 for one year. Write to the Assistant Editor, Richard Gutenkunst, Box 204, Wott, North Dakota. There is nothing on Diplomacy in the first issue, but I am told that it hopes to have a Diplomacy column in future.

- - - - -

New Blood

The following wrote asking about Diplomacy :

Mrs. Doris M. Beetem, 4161 West Eastman Ave., Denver, Colo., 80236.

Dr. Robert C. Heathley, Medical Arts Building, 104 South Spring,
Hurfreesboro, Tenn., 37130

- - - - -

Diplomacy Quiz - The Map.

A recent issue of Strategy and Tactics had a quiz on military history. Apparently meant for experts only it seemed to stump most readers - certainly it stumped me. However, the idea occurred that it might be possible to do something similar on various aspects of Diplomacy. Here is a set of questions based on our conference map. In most respects the conference map is identical to the board except in scale but, in case of difference, note that it is the printed black and white map that is referred to.

The reader who submits the most complete set of answers will receive a 10-issue extension to his K.O.B. subscription; in the event of a tie, the one with the earlier postmark will win. Deadline for receipt of answers: the 15th of March, 1968.

1. What province on the map is badly named?

2. Provinces of major powers which are supply centres are named for cities rather than areas. Which of them are not the largest cities within the indicated boundaries of the province. Remembering, of course, that the map applies to conditions in 1914.
3. The dots, to represent supply centres, are placed according to the following rules:
 - A. A supply centre of a major power is named for a city, and the dot is placed at the location of that city.
 - B. Supply centres which are neutral countries carry the name of the country, and the dot is placed at the location of its capital city.Making due allowance for the small scale of the map the great majority of the dots are correctly placed according to these two rules. Which are not?
4. It is sometimes suggested - I had a letter a week or so ago raising the question again - that it is legal for an army to move from Moscow to Syria on one move, the reasoning being that the square with the name and legend does not fit snugly against the lower right border of the map, so that the army is supposed to be able to march around the outside of it. What feature plainly makes this impossible, even without a special rule?
5. There is one legal move in the game which it would have been, in 1914, impossible for the military forces to carry out. What is it? (And let me say at once that this is not a support by fleets in provinces with split coasts question; otherwise someone is sure to tie himself in knots about the meaning of the word "support" in such a case.)
6. What is the highest point of land within the borders of our map?
7. The lowest?

- - - - -

Probingnag is edited and published by John McCallum, Ralston, Alberta, Canada. The price is ten cents per copy, with a similar rate for subscriptions and for back issues.

Probingnag is a journal of postal Diplomacy, the latter being a game manufactured and sold by Games Research, Inc., 48 Warren St., Boston, Mass., 02118.

As no games are currently carried in PROB the publication rate will be highly erratic, and infrequent, between now and next summer. Things should improve in June.

It is expected that the next issue will be a letter issue to clear the great back-log of unpublished letters in the files.